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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF AND INL  
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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: INITIAL TAKE ON NEW POLICE CHIEF

REF: ABUJA 823

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

1.(SBU) LEGATT and RNLEO paid an introductory call on new Inspector General of Police Tafa Balogun March 13 at Police Headquarters in Abuja. Balogun received the Embassy visitors warmly and promised a strong and productive working relationship with U.S. law enforcement agencies.

2.(SBU) Balogun, only three days on the job, already seemed to be gaining command of his brief. He lamented, however, that he could not yet introduce his team of Deputy Inspectors General (DIGs) since they have not yet been officially appointed (with portfolios). RNLEO voiced the Ambassador's desire to meet with the IGP at his earliest convenience; Balogun welcomed the opportunity.

3.(SBU) LEGATT called attention to the various training courses the FBI and other U.S. law enforcement agencies offer the Nigerian Police Force with INL funding and highlighted two upcoming courses: Community Policing and and Preservation of Crime Scene Evidence. Balogun expressed appreciation for the USG's provision of technical assistance and training to the NPF.

4.(SBU) Noting Balogun's March 11 visit to Lagos and his public pledges of police reform made during that visit, RNLEO asked the IGP for his priorities in the coming months. Balogun stated that he has an eight-point strategy to address the severe problems facing the Nigeria police:

A) Address the rise in armed robberies and violent attacks on police using a "fire-with-fire" approach;  
B) improving the conflict management skills of the police;  
C) Design a comprehensive training programme, conducive for "qualitative policing," for all levels of police;  
D) launch an aggressive anti-corruption campaign within and outside of the police force;  
E) carry out a "robust" public relations campaign designed to promote an image of the "people's police;"  
F) Strengthen the Community-Police Partnership using the modern model used throughout the world;  
G) Improve inter-agency cooperation and coordination, including with foreign law enforcement agencies;  
H) Improve the conditions of service and welfare of all officers, inspectors and rank-and file

6.(SBU) Balogun particularly emphasized the need for better training of NPF recruits and officers and the need to adopt a community policing approach, citing the US experience which should serve as a model for the NPF. RNLEO pointed out that the Police Reform project has these two issues as major concentrations of technical assistance and training and gave the IG a copy of the project document for his review.

7.(SBU) Comment: The new IGP seems to place great importance in the U.S.-Nigerian law enforcement relationship. Balogun will likely be a strong partner in both our operational law enforcement dealings and our police reform project. Reports from our sources seemed confirmed by this initial meeting: he appears sharp, articulate, engaging and warm -- qualities not found in his predecessor. His strategic priorities are another good sign, though we have some concerns about the first point but tend to think at this time that the "fire for fire" remark was intended more to bolster morale of police operating in areas of intense violent crime than to convey specific new policies or procedures.

Andrews